

PRESS RELEASE

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT URGES CONTINUED VIGILANCE FOR PANDEMIC H1N1

Health officials just received confirmation of the first fatality in Long Beach due to pandemic H1N1 influenza virus (previously known as swine flu). The patient was a man in his mid-20's with an underlying medical condition who became ill in late June, was hospitalized, but died of complications in early July. In the last three weeks, 15 other residents of Long Beach have been reported as hospitalized due to pandemic H1N1, and over 73 total cases have been reported in Long Beach since the start of the outbreak. After an initial decline in disease activity in late May and early June, H1N1 reports have been increasing throughout the state during the last 5 weeks, and disease activity remains high and widespread. Statewide, there have been over 400 hospitalizations and over 60 deaths due to pandemic H1N1.

The Health Department encourages people to see their healthcare provider if they develop flu-like symptoms (fever with cough and/or sore throat) and to practice the following healthy habits to prevent catching or spreading the flu:

- Wash hands with soap and water or a hand sanitizer frequently,
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick,
- Stay home if you are sick,
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into clothing (sleeves),
- Eat healthy food, drink plenty of water, exercise, get plenty of rest, do not smoke and avoid alcoholic beverages.

Although there is not yet a vaccine available for pandemic H1N1, production and testing of a vaccine are underway, and the Health Department is working on plans for vaccine distribution once it becomes available. For further information on H1N1, please visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's H1N1 webpage at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/ or the Health Department webpage at www.longbeach.gov/health.